

Report to Resources Committee

9 September 2014



Title: Investors in People (IiP) Accreditation and Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award

Report of: Support Services Manager

Purpose of Report

1. To update the committee on the outcome of the Investors in People Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award June 2014.

Background

2. Investors in People launched in 1991 as a business improvement tool, to provide a simple and flexible way for companies to improve their performance through their people.
3. It focuses on putting strategies in place to support the business and its employees, and provides guidance on areas such as people management, leadership, reward and recognition, empowerment, and learning and development.
4. The Gateshead Housing Company was first accredited in 2005, followed by re-accreditation in 2008. A Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award was introduced by Investors in People in 2011. The company's assessment resulted in the achievement of IiP Gold status and Health and Wellbeing in 2011.
5. To maintain the awards, companies must be re-assessed every three years.
6. In preparation, a diagnostic assessment was carried out by our IiP Specialist (Assessor) Lesley Curtis in September 2013. This provided the basis for an action plan which would take the company through to June 2014, and the next assessment.
7. A planning meeting was held in April where four objectives for the assessment were agreed as:
 - To confirm that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the Investors in People Standard and the Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award
 - To identify strengths and areas of good practice within the organisation

- To identify any areas for further development for continuous improvement
- To provide feedback on the effectiveness of change management within the company

The Assessment

8. The assessment took place over three days in June 2014.
9. The assessor interviewed 41 employees, across a range of services, selected on the basis of job role, location and length of service, with interviews being a combination of group and individual sessions.
10. Most of the interviews were held at the Civic Centre although the assessor did visit Blaydon Housing Office to speak with some employees.

Outcome of Assessments

11. Initial feedback was verbally provided to the management team at the end of the assessment followed by confirmation in writing.
12. We are pleased to inform the committee that the company achieve liP assessment and the Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award.

Summary of key findings

13. Initial feedback was verbally provided to the management team at the end of the assessment.

Investors in People Key strengths and areas of good practice

- Understanding of the company values, people are committed to providing excellent services and the majority believe that what they do makes a difference.
- Communication has improved with the introduction of 'Tea Time Talks, core brief, team briefs and the weekly newsletter.
- Constructive relationships with trade unions and a genuine commitment to engage and consult with employees.
- Learning and development opportunities on Wednesday afternoon training sessions
- Different approaches to learning and development: e-learning, on the job, work shadowing, internal courses and external qualifications
- Employees are very positive about the effectiveness of team working and the sharing of knowledge and skills within teams.
- Friendly and supportive culture that encourages team working
- Performance management process

Recommendations and opportunities for development

- Develop a management competency framework to improve people management skills
- Recognise contribution through empowerment of employees to make decisions

- Develop the skills of managers in respect of coaching so they develop the skills and expertise of employees.
- Review the training strategy in light of feedback from liP to maximise resources and to identify core training needs required to meet the business objectives.
- A formal feedback process to be introduced so employees see the results of their contribution to surveys, tea time talks etc.

Health and Wellbeing Good Practice key strengths and areas of good practice

- Excellent opportunities for flexible working and work life balance
- Absence management policy and support available for employees from HR and managers
- Well publicised resources, policies and procedures
- Easy access to occupational health, physiotherapy, counselling and chiropody.
- Access to events and activities to raise awareness of health and wellbeing

Recommendations and opportunities for development

- Enhance the health and wellbeing strategy by aligning other appropriate policies and procedures into the strategy so that health and wellbeing is integral to the business strategy.
- Develop and evaluate key performance indicators to establish the effectiveness or value of initiatives
- Develop health and wellbeing competencies as part of a management performance framework
- Remind employees of the initiatives and support available following co location to the civic centre.

Next steps

14. A continuous improvement plan was provided by the assessor for consideration by the company. The management team and organisational development service will manage the implementation of the actions.
15. It is a requirement of the liP process that the assessor will contact the company after 18 months. The company has discretion as to the form of contact for example to monitor the action plan or deliver a toolbox talk to managers.

Link to values

16. The report links to the following company values:-
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being positive and responsive
 - Being caring and respecting
 - Being motivated, trained, and committed across the company
 - Embracing equality

Impact on Customers

17. Increased employee engagement is proven to reduce sickness absence with employees also providing increased discretionary effort which improves the service provided to our customers.

Risk Management Implications

18. Increased staff turnover can result in the loss of essential knowledge and skills from the organisation

Financial implications

19. The Head of Finance confirms that any costs arising from this report can be met within existing budgets.

Equality and Diversity Implications

20. There are no equality and diversity implications.

Value for money Implications

21. Value for money principles are embedded and followed in all employee engagement and wellbeing activity.

Health Implications

22. There are no health implications

Environmental Implications

23. There are no environmental implications

Consultation Carried Out

24. No consultation was necessary when compiling this report

Recommendations

25. The committee is asked if they are satisfied with progress against the Investors in People standard and Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award and to receive updates on progress with the action plan.